creased by experience. That is a positive truth, and it will at once occur to you as men of judgment, how supremely ridiculous it is to reject precedent in the prosecution of the arts. I am not by any means an advocate for slavish imitation, but I say that it is only by being provided, armed with the knowledge of old, that you can hope to carry on a successful struggle for novelty, where it can be proved that that novelty is desirable. Tell the politician to reject history as his guide; the literary man to burn his classical library; the scientific man to try and start independent of his predecessors. And why must precedent be regarded? Because, I repeat, there are principles common to all art, eternal, immutable, so to speak, and which must ever coexist with human reason, and whose opposites are wholly contrary to that reason. What is it these men think they possess to enable them to start anew, who deride precedent? Of course *the power* to start anew. If they have the power, can they have derived it from anything but study, but the knowledge of precedent? If they have not the power, it shows that they are either deficient in genius, or are chargeable with culpable idleness. Men are not born architects, more than anything else, to such a degree that their genius needs no support from art. Art is the common mould used by all genius for the casting of its ideas. There is no other way of expressing, of fashioning them; and if genius refuse that, how shall it expect the common hand to grasp these ideas, the common eye to admire them, the common intellect to understand them? Who will say that art has nothing to do with precedent? Who? Does any one cry the first artist (Homer, for instance) had no precedent? I say he had the precedent of nature, and has, in one branch, formed thereon the precedent of art. Horace says that, as art without genius can do nothing, so only can genius without art. It may be very unfortunate for Antiprecedent, that art has been already established, and that he cannot now be the Homer of the world, as it is too late; but it is the fact; and he must therefore condescend to accept what some thirty past centuries have provided for him, and to allow that they have not passed in vain. Let those, then, who sneer at William of Wykeham, and who deride Wren, be first sure that they understand *as well* the universal principles of art, not to speak now of styles of art, before they attempt novelty; at any rate, such novelty, as must, from the rejection of precedent, consist in hitherto unknown hideousness. The principal novelty to be rationally expected here is, perhaps, a further carrying out of the Vertical style, in some manner *suited to the age and its materials*: for that style is not, per force, wedded to stone and tiles, and heraldic lions; but we will look for the magical use of iron and glass, and the rest; and for something more varied than some 500 churches, that might be taken for sisters; and for *good drawing* in the coloured windows and polychromous ornaments. It is certain nothing good will result from working out our present ordinary style of street-architecture, or the nondescript barn-style displayed in many places of worship—buildings highly symbolical, i. e. of total ignorance of art, undefended and indefensible. That moment when architects repel grandeur, beauty, truth of design, and encourage the bald, blank, hopeless abortiveness above alluded to,—when they so encourage idleness and decry study,—when, in fact, they so endeavour to destroy taste, and the very spirit of art itself, it will be a sign that their branch of art, once so great and glorious, is near to its decease, and, in the words of Milton,

"Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fallen."

To resume concerning the true search for taste, let simplicity of idea, and in particular utility, be always regarded. A useless work, a too ornate work, a bald work, an incongruous work, all fail in point of taste: a confusion of ideas is to be as much avoided in architecture as in literature. It would be as ridiculous for an architect to put a Gothic Gargoyle on a Grecian edifice, as it is for the poet to talk of his *bridled* muse being anxious to *launch*, where she becomes at once a horse and a ship. *Ex uno discite omnes.* The same principles hold good in all, as in this particular. If it be asked who shall be the guide in pursuit of taste, I answer, Nature. A man who is a lover and student of nature will continually improve his eye, by observing her magnificent combinations of form and colour, and will throng his mind with a host of grand and beautiful images. He will observe her, too, as she is depicted in himself, in his fellows; in their necessities and excesses; in their likes and dislikes; and he will know how to act to a good purpose. As in other things, so in art. And it must not be forgotten, that one great object of art is to educate.

In criticising a work, see if it is nature which is the moving spirit in its creation, and you will have an infallible test! But then how necessary is it for us to improve our own knowledge of, and taste for, nature, for if we are unacquainted with her forms and effects, we shall of course be wholly unable to apply them as tests, and shall in result wholly fail in the pursuit of taste. No man could rightly portray character without observing nature; neither could any build an appropriate edifice, for instance, a dwelling, without regard to the wants and habits of those for whom it was intended. It is from nature that the mind must derive ideas which it shall mould by art, and reproduce for the delight and astonishment of mankind. Go then to her for a guide; learn grandeur from the mountains; vastness from the flood; the force and combination of colour, and grace of form from the forest, fertility from the vale. For in creation is the very perfection and wonder of taste displayed, for there it is divine. The glory of nature is above that of art, as the glory of the lily is above that of the robes of Solomon. Consider the taste that waves before us in the many hues of the autumnal wood, that flows at our feet in the winding stream that encircles it, that arches over our heads in the rainbow, that flutters before us in the dyed wings of the tiger moth. There is that in nature which alone can charm, can elevate; and Art may struggle on in vain, if she would seek to be independent of that wonderful expression of the Divine Mind, which we call nature; but if she will imitate that, if she will make her model of those marvellous works that surround us, there is no pitch of excellence to which she may not attain, no power which she may not express, no grace which she may not be able to display; but, standing aloft in the perfection of her beauty, she will be able to point to Nature, as her mother, so justly, that we might find it difficult to tell the difference between that sublime pair, excepting by the divine expression which must for ever distinguish the work of God from that of man, but which was granted for man's instruction and his love.

H. T. Braithwaite.

THE SECRET OF ANCIENT PAINTED GLASS.

At the meeting of the British Association it was remarked, as an unexplained wonder, that cleaning, or rather polishing old painted glass, made it into apparently modern glass, for that it acquired all the thin transparency of colour which characterises the modern manufacture. Of this fact we have a mortifying illustration in the beautiful windows of King's College Chapel, Cambridge, several of which, having been cleaned at great expense, are entirely ruined as far as their ancient character is concerned, for they cannot now be distinguished from modern windows.

To account for this curious fact it was stated that the external surface of all old glass is rough, and the light passing through the uneven surface is so refracted as to produce the softened effect characteristic of ancient glass, and it was supposed that this roughening was the effect of time and exposure to the weather, which gradually destroyed the surface, as we see in stone and some other materials. When this old glass is polished, the surface is again rendered smooth, and thus the peculiar effect upon the light, which is so much valued, is lost. According to this theory, therefore, the character of ancient glass is an accident, dependent upon time and weather, and I have been informed that in order to imitate it, a quantity of painted glass was lately made at St. Helen's, Lancashire, by being cast upon a sand bed, so that the surface was roughened to begin with, but I have not heard that the experiment answered, and the plan is not now pursued. If the following observations are correct, it is evident that such a method could not be expected to succeed.

A quantity of old painted glass having been sent to Mr. Forrest, a glass painter of Liverpool, to be cleaned, he found that the outer surface of the whole was covered with a layer of what appeared to be hard dried dust and rain, which was easily removed by a short application of hydrofluoric acid, or by the other means adopted for cleaning old windows. He was struck, however, by observing that every now and then there were perfectly clear places to which the dust had apparently not adhered, and these were sometimes curved lines, sometimes dots or roundish spaces, sometimes small and at other times of considerable size. At first it simply appeared odd that the dirt should have adhered so partially; but at length it struck him that possibly these clear spaces might be intentional, and the dirt not dirt after all, but paint burnt in to the surface of the glass. On further examination he found that this was really the case, and that the clear spaces were *lights* taken out of semi-opaque back-ground; as is illustrated by the accompanying drawing, which I have made from an ancient head taken from one of the windows in York Minster. It will be observed that there is a deficiency of the dark ground corresponding with the side of the nose, which being turned to the light would have a prominent light upon it. So also with the forehead, the cheek, the prominence of the ear, the ridges between the nose and upper lip, the lip and the chin—in short, wherever a feature would catch the light prominently, there the light passes through the glass unobstructed, but in all other points it goes through a *very thin* dark ground ere it reaches the colour in the glass, which softens it, and gives the peculiar character of mellowness so much admired in ancient windows. In the drapery and all other parts the same principle is carried out, the prominences being clear on the back.

The dark ground is obtained by burning a very thin layer of fused oxide of iron into the back of the glass, and the lights may either be removed after the whole is covered, or they may be left originally as in the drawing. In order to test his theory, Mr. Forrest has made a window upon this principle, which is placed in his warehouse; and, making allowance for its being an early production after his discovery, the effect is so successful as to carry strong conviction with it. He states that he has observed the same thing in all the old glass which has come under his notice; and the few observations I have been able to make in this neighbourhood (Liverpool), where we have scarcely any old windows, have confirmed his remark. It is evident, that if in cleaning an old window the back-ground is mistaken for dirt, as is almost inevitable from its appearance, the removal of it will entirely destroy the peculiar ancient effect.

The observation appears to me to be of so much interest, especially at a time when so

much painted glass is made as in the present day, that I shall be obliged by your insertion of these remarks; and as many of your readers may have opportunities of examining old